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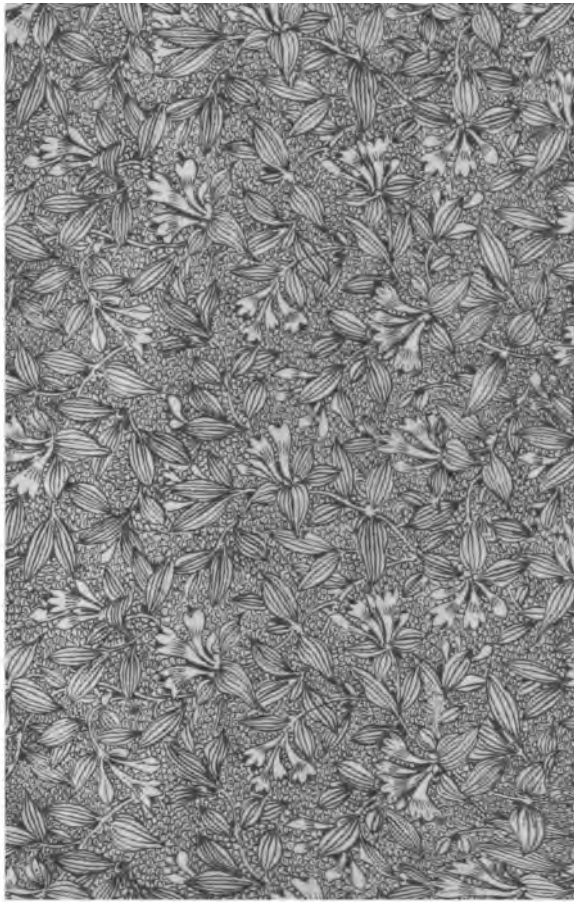

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My Hereafter.

BY

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DEAN OF LICHFIELD.

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CONTENTS.

Part I.—My Hereafter.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

How I came to be 1

CHAPTER II.

Man considered with regard to his Threefold Constitution of Body, Soul, and Spirit 12

CHAPTER III.

The Intermediate State 27

CHAPTER IV.

The Resurrection of the Body 41

CHAPTER V.

Judgment to Come 58

CHAPTER VI.

The Final Award 71

CHAPTER VII.

The Happy Hereafter 86

Part II.—How to Prepare for My Hereafter.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

Purity of Intention 56

CHAPTER II.

A Constant Sense of the Presence of God 99

CHAPTER III.

Repentance 102

CHAPTER IV.

Faith 105

CHAPTER V.

Hope 108

CHAPTER VI.

Charity 111

CHAPTER VII

Prayer 113

CHAPTER VIII.

Holy Communion 117

HEART CHORDS.

MY HEREAFTER.

Part I.—My Hereafter.

CHAPTER I.

HOW I CAME TO BE.

IN the consideration of "My Hereafter" is involved, first, the question, How I came to be at all? And it need hardly be added that it is only from Revelation that we learn whence we came. Apart from the Bible, all is a dark and cheerless unknown.

In the early history of our country there is a touching incident which illustrates this. It occurred in the early part of the seventh century, during the time of the Anglo-Saxon rule, when Edwin was King of Northumberland, and Paulinus Bishop of York. The good King

had been prevailed upon by Paulinus to embrace Christianity, and to recommend it to his subjects. For this purpose he called together an assembly of his chief friends and counsellors, and asked them what they thought of the new faith. The first to speak was Coifi, a Pagan priest, whose words showed that he had an eye chiefly to his own worldly advantage. He said that the old Pagan worship had done him no good; that though he had devoted himself most earnestly to it, yet many had received from the King more favours than he had. These gods had not done him any service. It might therefore be worth while to try the new religion; and if they found it more profitable than the old, then forthwith to adopt it.

One of the King's thanes followed Coifi, and made use of a vivid and touching simile to set forth the mystery of life apart from Revelation. This simile is beautifully given as follows in one of Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sonnets:

"Man's life is like a sparrow, mighty King!
That, while at banquet with your chiefs you sit,

Housed near a blazing fire, is seen to flit
Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,
Here did it enter; there, on hasty wing
Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;
But whence it came we know not, nor behold
Whither it goes. E'en such that transient thing
The human soul, not utterly unknown,
While in the body lodged, her warm abode;
But from what world she came, what woe or weal
On her departure waits, no tongue hath shown.
This mystery, if the stranger can reveal,
His be a welcome, cordially bestowed!"

Other elders and counsellors having spoken to the same effect, the King, at the request of Coifi, commanded Paulinus to unfold more fully the doctrines of Revelation; and when Paulinus had laid open to the Council what natural religion could not teach them, they acknowledged the power of Divine truth. King Edwin thereupon publicly announced his acceptance of the Christian faith; and then, having appealed to the assembly to know who would be the first to profane the idol temples and altars, Coifi stood forward, and said: "Now I understand

what the truth is. I have long known that it was not with us. But now I see it shining out clearly in this teaching. Let us destroy these useless temples and altars, and give them up to the curse and the flame." Suiting the action to the word, he called for his arms and a horse, and thus equipped, he rode to the celebrated temple, the site of which is known to this day as "Goodmanham" (formerly "Godmandingaham," near Market Weighton, between York and Beverley), hurled his lance at it, and bade his companions set fire to the building with all its precincts. Thus the whole of Northumbria, by a National act, embraced Christianity.

These same words of eternal truth, which converted our Saxon forefathers 1,200 years ago, have been brought nigh to us. The Almighty has Himself lifted the veil, and broken the silence. At various periods of this world's history communications have been sent to us from heaven. At one period in particular, some *eighteen cen*turies and more ago, a new and

most remarkable communication was opened. God who of old time, "by divers portions and in divers manners," had spoken unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son ; and in the fulness of time God Himself appeared on earth in the person of the Incarnate Son. We are assured, upon testimony abundantly sufficient to carry conviction to all thoughtful and reasonable minds, that such a communication has taken place. The secrets of eternity have been laid open to us. The Bible teaches us whence we came and what we are. It tells us the history of our race from the beginning. It tells us of our fall in the First Adam, and of our rising again in the Second. It points from death to life, from the grave to immortality.

Modern unbelief meets us with the old objections in new forms, and alleges that the evidences for the truth of Revelation are not so clear as to justify us in accepting them without some qualification. But in so momentous a matter, is it not the part of true wisdom to act

upon a probability if you cannot reach a certainty? It is easy for a man to say that he has doubts about the truth of Revelation, that he cannot altogether satisfy himself as to the evidences on which it rests, and that therefore he is excusable for neglecting it. But this conclusion we cannot admit. If it is only probable that Revelation is true, then I am bound, as a reasonable man, to proceed upon the probability. There is far too much at stake to allow of our being justified in despising Revelation merely because we may not be able to satisfy ourselves upon every point of the evidence by which it has come down to us. The question is, Are we able to prove that God has never given us a Revelation? or that, if He has given it, it is not contained in the Bible? Certainly no one who knows anything of the state of the Christian argument would venture to prove this. We must admit the probability —the high probability—even if we do not admit the absolute certainty—that the Bible *is of God; and* admitting the probability,

we should consider that enough to make us strive to live as those who must feel within themselves that they have at least a capacity for immortality. The risk that a man runs by acting on the supposition that Christianity may not be true because he cannot see convincing proof that it is true, is far too great to be run by any man of sense who knows himself to be an accountable creature. There is nothing lost by accepting Christianity; eternity may be lost by refusing to embrace it. Not, indeed, that there is any want of witness for God, even where men have not been blessed with a Revelation. The visible creation, the consent of all nations, the constitution of our nature, the moral law written in our hearts: all these are evidences which it is impossible to overlook, and which must render him who resists them inexcusable. But there are deeper truths than these to which the Gospel witnesses. Natural religion, no doubt, bears witness to God and to His moral government of the world. But natural religion leaves us very much in the

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eator; whereas, wherever the Gospel
ned, it tells of an Atonement for sin,
od's willingness to pardon and bless
: who by faith embraces that Atonement.
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› the fulness of all that Jesus Christ is.
us pause for a moment before we pa
, and ponder this great truth, that God
aker. I look around on this ea

with its teeming population of more than 1,400 millions of souls; and I ask myself, where were they all a hundred years ago? Other things were then in existence, but we were not. The sun in the heavens, the moon and the stars were there, much the same as they are now. The face of the earth, with its mountains, its valleys, its oceans, its rivers, was then very much what it is at this hour. But where was I, where were these 1,400 millions, a hundred years ago? We were all then as yet nothing. All that thought and feeling and desire which makes up this mass of human beings, each in his own conscious personality, did not then exist.

But at this moment I feel myself to be in possession of that most blessed, but most awful, gift which we call life. I find myself endowed with understanding, affections, and will. I am conscious of my own existence. It is I myself. How comes it to pass that I thus exist? It is the gift of the Lord our Maker. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." We neither

fashioned our own being, nor did we come into existence by chance. When God saw fit, He made me. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book they all were written, the days that they were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Such is, I believe, the true rendering of this verse. The eyes of God saw me when I was an embryo, an unformed atom, invisible to human eye. And all my future was fashioned by Him, written in the volume of His Omniscience, when as yet there was none of it.

God did not need any one of us. We were not indispensable to His happiness or His glory. Why then did He make us? Why has He drawn us out of the abyss of nothing? Why has He made us men and women, rather than stones or vegetables or brute creatures? Why has He made us after His own image? It is because He loved us from all eternity. It is to the love of God that we owe our existence. When we had no existence, save in the mind of *God; and* when men on earth knew as little

about us as we know about those who will succeed us a hundred years hence, we had each a place and a home in the thought of God. And now that He has given us life, He sustains us in life from moment to moment. We are as dependent upon Him for life from moment to moment as the light is dependent upon the sun from which it proceeds. "In Him we live and move and have our being." And further:—God has made us for Himself, to be employed in His service, and live to His glory. It is true that He has made all things for Himself. It could not be otherwise. This is true of the minutest insect, no less than of the loftiest archangel, that they were made for God. And all God's works praise Him. The great Universe praises Him. The inanimate creation praises Him, by its obedience to the laws which He has impressed upon it, and which cannot be broken. Nor ought it to have been otherwise with man. On the contrary, man was formed that he might praise God with a higher worship, even that of reason, and of conscious desire.

God made us for Himself, Himself, the infinite, unchanging God, compared with whom all else is transient and unsatisfying. All that is not God is vanity, because nothing less than God can satisfy the deep longings of the soul. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thee; and our heart is unquiet until it has found rest in Thee."

CHAPTER II.

MAN CONSIDERED WITH REGARD TO HIS THREEFOLD CONSTITUTION OF BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT.

WHAT a mystery is our being! And what a continual study does it suggest to us, as it directs our thoughts from time to eternity, and we then find them reflected back from eternity to time! All men naturally desire to know something about what is to become of them when they die; *and there is* deep-seated in the human heart

an instinctive feeling that death does not terminate our existence. The speculations of Paganism, almost without exception, bear witness to this. But knowing nothing of that great truth which Revelation has made known to us, namely, the resurrection of the body, the ancient heathen philosophers indulged in wild fancies on the subject.

Sometimes they conceived of a mere shadowy, unreal existence, and peopled the future with shades of the departed. This, however, was too unsubstantial a theory to satisfy the Soul's instinctive cravings for immortality.

Another theory was that of the transmigration of souls, so that the soul of man after death passed into some other man, and so on in a succession. It is needless, however, to observe that this theory strikes at the root of a man's personal identity, and so cuts off his individual connection with futurity.

Others, treating the question in a more philosophical spirit, speak in glowing terms of the *immortality* of the soul. But then they describe

the soul, not as something external to God and created by Him, but as a part of God, which, upon its separation from the body by death, is again absorbed into Deity—again mingled with the Divine essence.

Now, all this was very different from the Jewish conceptions of a future state. Under the Law, God was training the Jew gradually for the more full revelation of the Gospel. Under the Law the Jew was taught the existence of God—an existence external to, and independent of, the world which He had made. He was thus taught to recognise and lay hold upon an Eternal Being, to whom, by his creation, he was responsible ; and so the Law was educating him, and preparing him for the more perfect dispensation which was to succeed. It is true that both the Heathen and the Jew stood upon the threshold, as it were, of the doctrine of a future life ; and now and then we find language, both in the writings of Heathen philosophers and in the inspired utterances of the Old Testament, *which, as it* were, anticipate the full light

of the Gospel. But, generally speaking, the Pagan view was a gross misconception of the future life, while the Jewish was the absence of a definite conception of it.* It was reserved for the Gospel to brush away all the false conceptions of Paganism on this subject, and to reveal that for which the Law had been the preparation. The Gospel makes the stupendous announcement of everlasting life beyond the grave—a life which, in those who fulfil the purposes of their existence here, is one of increasing and ascending glory without end. Nor is this a shadowy, unreal existence. It is a solid resurrection life, and that for ever. This is the tremendous truth on which our HEREAFTER depends. Infidelity refuses to accept it. But God's Word declares it to us ; and in the devout study of that Word our thoughts find their suitable direction and their appropriate limit.

Holy Scripture teaches us that man consists of three parts, "body, soul, and spirit" (1 Thess.

* See the late Professor Mozley's Lectures. Rivingtons, 1883.

v. 3). It further teaches us that, in the present state of being, these three parts are not absolutely indissoluble.

The body was first made out of the dust of the earth. This was the material organisation ; which, having been first created, was then informed with an indestructible principle of life, which we call by the name of soul, and which here means the animal sentient life—that which we share in common with the beasts. To this, again, was superadded the faculty of the understanding, called spirit, which higher faculty is the proper recipient of the Holy Spirit of God. Thus man, in his threefold composite being, becomes an image of the Holy Trinity. The spirit (though sometimes confounded with the soul, which, in the rational man, is indeed ennobled and drawn up into the spirit)—the spirit is the rational part. It is that part of our nature which is called mind, more especially if it is informed by faith and endowed with the Holy Spirit of God. This was the higher faculty *that* God imparted to man when He created

him in His own image. It was for the recovery of this image, marred and impaired by the Fall, that Christ died; and the image is recovered in those who, having been baptised into Christ and made again partakers of the Divine nature, are giving diligence to make their calling and election sure.

Thus the Apostle prays that the "body, soul, and spirit" of the Christian may be preserved entire—recovered, as far as the infirmity of human nature will admit, to the state from which it fell in Adam; although we can never attain, even in our best estate in this life, to the perfection in which our forefather was created, still less to the perfection of Him who is the Second Adam. We have need to pray daily that the body may obey the soul, and the soul the spirit, so that the spirit, regenerated in Holy Baptism, and renewed by grace, may serve God daily more and more; and that God may communicate His holiness to the spirit, and through the spirit to the soul and body; so that, in the Day of Judgment, the whole being—spirit, soul,

and body—may be found acceptable to God, and be presented at last as a "pure virgin to Christ."

At this point, however, it will be well for us to consider somewhat more at length the condition from which Adam fell, in order that we may the better understand what we ourselves have fallen from, and what we hope to be hereafter, through our regeneration in Christ Jesus, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

The account given to us in Genesis of the creation of man stands distinguished from all the other works of God's hand. It seems—if the expression may be permitted—to have employed the Creator's utmost skill. In the forming of other creatures we have but the traces of His footsteps; in this we have the very draft of His hand. The words are no longer "Let the earth bring forth," but "Let us make man." God—let it be said with reverence—deliberates before this great act; and we are only following the interpretation of the early Fathers when we say that we have here a hint of that plurality in the Divine unity which was more fully revealed

when God the Father sent His only Begotten Son into the world, and when the only Begotten Son returned to His Father's throne as God and man, and when the Holy Spirit, Himself a Divine person, descended from heaven to take His place as the indwelling Sanctifier of His Church.

Man then was created by the counsels of the Eternal Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And as originally created he was a glorious creature. This he must have been, since he was formed in the image of God. It was, of course, only in spirit that there could exist a resemblance between the creature and the Creator. The image impressed upon man must have been a moral image. St. Ambrose says that it was after this image that Adam was first made, even after "the ornaments of grace and of supernatural virtue." Again, St. Augustine says that the image of God consisted "in the incorporeality of his soul, in its individuality, in its immortality, in its rational intelligence; in his free will, memory, forethought, and imag-

nation ; in his moral qualities of holiness and love of what is good." There were, indeed, other respects in which a resemblance subsisted ; for if we survey man as invested with a dominion over the lower creation, we recognise in him the vicegerent, and if the vicegerent, then in some sense the image of God. But the image for which we are looking is that in which Adam was first created, and therefore cannot be explained by rank or authority subsequently given. We conclude, therefore, in the remarkable words of Philo, that Adam, before his fall, "having much of the Divine Spirit flowing in upon him, studied both to do and speak all things so as to please his Father and King, treading on His footsteps in that highway of virtue which was chalked out unto him, and in which those souls alone may walk whose aim and end it is to attain at length an assimilation to that God who begat them."*

Now, when we attempt to compare **our-**

* Philo (de Mundi Opificio) ; quoted by Bishop **Bull** ; *Sermon v.*

selves in our fallen state with what Adam was before he fell, and with what we hope to be in the great HEREAFTER, it is important to remember that we are not beings of a different nature from our forefather, but of the same nature in a different and degraded condition. Hence, it will help us to arrive at an estimate of what Adam must have been in his uprightness if we try to ascertain what one of us would become, if, without being furnished with new faculties, the old faculties were simply renewed in us. Adam, as originally formed, was like the image clearly reflected from the smooth surface of the mirror. In us, the likeness is that given from the soiled and shattered glass. The traces, indeed, may be seen; but broken, dim, and distorted.

Think of Adam first with reference to his understanding. In Adam this was the controlling faculty, and the exercise of it could have been no labour. It was free and firm in its operation, and it was always rightly affected towards God. Adam knew his own dependence

upon his Creator. His Creator's will was hi law. Then think of him with reference to hi will. His will, while he was yet innocent, ha an absolute freedom of choice: to yield to o to resist a temptation. Say what we can of th present weakness of the will, and of its slaver to the affections: in the beginning it was nc so. We were not made crooked. The under standing and the will in Adam were never a variance. It is, indeed, the nature of the will t be led by the understanding. But in Adam though it was subordinate, it was never enslave to the reason. Then for the affections. I Adam there was *love*—not that earthly thin which too often usurps the name, but lov directed to the right object, ever kindling witl devotion towards God and goodwill toward men. If there was *anger* in a world wher there could have been little or nothing to excite it it must have been a passion strictly limited b the measures of reason. It was ever directed t God's honour. Then, too, there was *joy*—not a sudden or superficial thing—not a mere blaze o

the spirits—but a noble affection, "filling the soul, as God fills the Universe, silently and without noise." Then again for *hope*. If, indeed, there was room for the exercise of this faculty amidst the fulness of the enjoyments of the state of innocence, it must have been directed towards yet more intimate admission to the Creator's love, and a yet deeper communion with what is holy and glorious. And, lastly, for *fear*. This must have been the instrument of caution, and not of anxiety. It must have been fixed on Him who alone is to be feared. It dwelt in a heart that dreaded God at the same time that it loved God.

Further, it must be remembered that these faculties dwelt in a body as yet unscathed by sin or weakened by the consequences of sin. Adam had, no doubt, a beautiful body as well as an immortal soul. It was such as our bodies would be, if they were free from the inroads of sickness and the liability to death. Adam knew no disease; and had he not eaten of the forbidden fruit, he might have passed at once

safely through his probation to a happy immortality.*

Such, then, was man as originally created in the image of God. And this may serve to show us how great was the injury which we sustained by the fall of our first parents. Take a man in the bloom and the freshness of his youth, and take that same man in the last condition of his drooping years, and you would hardly know him to be the same man; so different are the wrinkled brow, and the stooping gait, and the tottering steps, from the open features and the firm elastic tread of youth. Greater is the difference between man upright and man fallen. The image of God is dim and defaced. Distempers and diseases have made havoc of the excellent frame of his body, and disaster and decay have similarly invaded his spirit. Sad indeed is the change, and terrible the fall. But, blessed be God! not irreparable is the ruin.

* See a noble Sermon by Dr. South, entitled, "The Creation of Man in the Image of God," of which the writer has here made free use.

Man shattered the image, but God of His wondrous mercy has renewed it in Christ Jesus. He has looked in pity upon the ruin. And as the first creation of man in the image of God was the work of the Holy Trinity, so again the three Divine Persons have united to renew and restore. The Father has sent the Son and the Holy Spirit into the world ; and the Son of God has satisfied every claim of justice by His death upon the Cross, that the soul of man for His sake may be accounted pure in the sight of God ; and the Holy Spirit has renewed him with the washing of regeneration, that his spirit may be life because of righteousness.

We need, therefore, no longer shrink from our Maker under the sense of our sinfulness and unworthiness, because we know that He who made us has also died for us, and is risen again that we might live through Him. This is the great central truth of Christianity. I, a sinful creature, might well tremble to look upon God merely as my Maker. But when I look to Him through His dear Son, who is both God

and man; then, through the mystery of His Incarnation and His atoning sacrifice, I can cling to Him in full assurance of faith. For me the past is blotted out—all my sins and negligences and ignorances—through the shedding of His most precious blood. Thus, new and everlasting hopes are kindled within me. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the Church, and by means of the ministry of the Word, and of the Holy Sacraments, I can lay hold of this great salvation. Christ is in me, the hope of glory. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And I know that if I am true to Him, I shall be His, and He will be mine, in life, in death, and for ever more.

We now begin to see the preparations for happy state of being hereafter, both in body soul, and spirit. But ere this, the soul spirit must be separated from the body the mysterious act of death, the spirit pa into the intermediate state, and the body *the grave*, to be raised again and re-unite

the same soul and spirit at the appointed time. This, however, must form the subject of another Chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

It was observed in an earlier Chapter that the three parts of which man is composed are not absolutely indissoluble. Whether, if man had remained innocent, they would have continued inseparable, or whether, if he had passed safely through his probation, his tripartite nature would have undergone some change fitting it for an immortal condition, we know not. But we do know that in consequence of his sin he and his posterity are doomed to death; "and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The infliction of the penalty was delayed; but, from the moment of his sin, Adam became mortal. The patriarchs lived to vast ages. Adam, for example, lived 930 years

Seth 912, Jared 962; while Methuselah, the oldest man on record, lived to be 969 years old. Various reasons have been assigned for this remarkable extension of human life during the ages immediately following the Fall. Some have thought that it was granted to the patriarchs in order that the earth might be the sooner peopled; or that the knowledge of God, thus handed down by tradition, might be the better preserved. But without questioning that these and other purposes of Providence may have been answered by this dispensation, a thoughtful mind may probably perceive in this vast duration of human existence, in the period immediately subsequent to the Fall, the signs and footprint of that endless HEREAFTER for which man was destined had he continued upright. In the protracted lives of Adam and his immediate descendants we seem to observe the original and magnificent conveyance to him of immortal nature. We seem to behold noble endowment delaying, as it were, *retiring slowly*, as though unwilling to with-

itself from the creature to whom it had been conditionally consigned. The gradual diminution in the length of human life is a presumptive evidence of the original intention of God—namely, that man, whom he had created in His own image, should live for ever. But no sooner had "sin entered into the world," and "death by sin," than those amazing physical powers which must have belonged to Adam in his state of innocence began to deteriorate; and so, as one succession of the race after another was produced, it was propagated in a diminishing ratio, with something less of the original vigour. As generation succeeded generation, the vital force became weaker, and the contest with death became less equal; and so life gradually shortened, and the days of man became less in number, until they had dwindled down from many centuries to three-score years and ten. The now forfeited immortality seems, as it slowly departed, to have flung its lingering shadow over those primæval men, as though to *remind them* and us, their successors, of that

immortal state which was lost by sin, but which, through the Divine mercy, shall be recovered in the regeneration, when those who have been born anew in Christ, and have made their calling and election sure, and have died in faith, shall rise to eternal life in the completeness of their original being, through Him who is the resurrection and the life, without any fear of further change or touch of mortal decay. For a time, however, the body will be separated from the soul and spirit. The act of death is the separation of the body from the soul and spirit; and then the body, sooner or later, is resolved into the dust out of which it was first formed, until "the voice of the archangel" and the trump of God shall call all men from their graves, and the dead in Christ shall be admitted to their "perfect consummation and bliss" in Christ's eternal and everlasting kingdom.

Here, then, for a time we lose sight of the body. But what is the condition of the unclothed spirit during this interval of separation? *What is the* present state of those whom we

have known upon earth, whose bodies are now resting in the grave, and whose spirits have passed into the unseen world? We, ourselves, must shortly follow them. Where shall we then be? These surely are questions of deep and solemn interest to every thoughtful mind.

There are three passages of Holy Scripture which throw considerable light on this subject.

(1) There is, first, our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus (St. Luke, xvi. 19). This parable clearly reveals that intermediate state of happiness or misery in which the souls of the righteous and the wicked await their final and eternal condition. It is true that the bodily members of the rich man are spoken of—as his eyes and his tongue. But these organs are here named figuratively, in order to represent to us the actual state of conscious existence of the disembodied spirit. In both cases the material body remained in its present resting-place on earth; while that personality to which universal consent rightly ascribes sensibility to bliss or woe, the man's real self, is translated into the other

world. The narrative or parable represents, through bodily figures, Hades (not Gehenna), that intermediate place or state into which the spirits of all alike pass at death—divided, as it is, into the abode of the good and the evil, and separated by an impassable gulf. Dives beholds Lazarus in "the bosom of Abraham," an expression familiar to the Jews as representing the happy side of Hades, where all the fathers were conceived of as resting in bliss, while he himself was on the other side of woe and misery.

"Abraham's bosom" is, indeed, but another name for Paradise, the happy abode into which the spirits of the faithful pass immediately after their separation from the body. The imagery is suggestive of rest and refreshment: a place where the spirits and souls of the righteous recline, as it were, at a spiritual banquet, and are comforted with spiritual delights, holding sweet converse with the Saviour of men and with the souls of holy men and women of every age, and waiting, with calm yet earnest expectation, for

the redemption of their bodies, and their admission to their final blessedness.

(2) Another passage which helps us to some definite knowledge as to the condition of the faithful departed is that in St. Luke (xxiii. 43), where our Lord says from His Cross to the penitent robber, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The word Paradise is of Eastern origin, and is regarded by the best authorities, both ancient and modern, as a Persian word. The expression is frequently employed by Xenophon, and, according to his use of it, it suggests the idea of a wide open park, fenced against injury, and yet with its natural beauty unimpaired, being adorned with stately trees, and fair shrubs, and fruits and flowers; watered with clear streams, and stocked with beautiful birds and beasts. Thus we can understand how the term, whatever its true derivation may have been, came to be employed to represent the "Garden of Eden." But after the fall of man and the promise of redemption, this term Paradise assumed a new

meaning. Thus, in the Revelation of St. John (ii. 7), we find the promise "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God."

(3) There is one more passage, of great and peculiar interest as bearing upon this subject. It is to be found in 2 Cor. xii. 1—4. St. Paul there tells us, that in order to strengthen him for the trials and sufferings which awaited him in his long career of missionary labour, God was pleased to give him two distinct visions. He was caught up (verse 2) "even to the third heaven;" and, again (verse 4), "he was caught up into Paradise." It would seem from hence that St. Paul had first a vision of the final consummation and bliss of the saints, both in body and soul in heaven; and then that he had a vision of Paradise, where the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity until the morning of the resurrection. The Apostle seems to pause reverently as he recalls his experience of more than fourteen years before, and revives his *recollection of* what then befell him. Again, he

affirms his unconsciousness as to whether he was in the body or "apart from" the body (it is a different preposition that he here uses; not "out of," as before, but "apart from"); and he seems to imply the possibility that his body may have been left, as it were, on the threshold of Paradise, and that it was his spirit only that was admitted there. But regard this passage as we will, it seems to teach us that, in these "visions and revelations of the Lord," St. Paul saw, for the moment, first the heaven itself, the future abode of the risen saints; and that afterwards he saw that intermediate state into which the souls of the faithful pass immediately after death.

It may be further observed that it was in Paradise that St. Paul says that he "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Assuming, then, that it was in his spirit (separate from his body) that he went into Paradise, we may understand how it was that the things which his spirit perceived baffled the power of description by his bodily organs. When we converse with "flesh and blood," with

men like ourselves, we speak to them as those who are endowed with the same faculties that we possess, and are enriched with the same sources of thought. But the Apostle had been transported to another world. His spirit had penetrated the separate state. He had entered into associations altogether different from those of earth. How, then, could he describe them? He had been brought into contact with another realm of being. He had been introduced into a world of spirit, and not of flesh. How, then, could he describe to creatures like ourselves the things that human eye hath not seen nor human ear heard? He was liberated for a time from the infirmities and restraints of the body. His soul, set free from the thraldom of the corruptible body, could be attentive, collected, absorbed with the objects which God presented to his mind. But he could not communicate what he had perceived or heard when he was again clothed upon with a mortal body. There were no figures by which he could represent it. He *saw the things* incorruptible and undefiled, and

that fade not away. He saw the glorified Saviour, that Lord whose voice he had heard from heaven on his way to Damascus. But he could not express to those in the body what he had seen. Nay! it would seem as though God Himself had impressed upon him the seal of secrecy. It was a special communication for his own support and comfort; but it was no part of that revelation which is vouchsafed to ordinary Christians.

Let us here pause for a moment, and consider what is thus far revealed to us as to our HEREAFTER, immediately upon the separation of soul and body.

First, then, let us observe that the departed spirit does not sleep, does not fall into a state of unconsciousness, during its disembodied condition. We gather plainly both from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and from our Lord's words to the penitent robber, as well as from the passage which we have just been considering, that when the spirit escapes from its earthly tenement there is no interval—not a

moment of unconsciousness ; but that the spirit still lives on, freed from the trammels of the corruptible body. Such is the teaching of the Early Church. "The souls of the wicked," says Justin Martyr (Apol. ii.), "subsisting even after death, feel punishment ; but the souls of good men live happily free from punishments." So our own Church, in that sublimely beautiful office, the Office for the Burial of the Dead, bids us join in these words, "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord ; and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity." But then, lest it should be supposed that the souls of the faithful have already attained their full and final happiness, or will attain it before the great Day of the Resurrection and Judgment she bids us further pray, in the same Collect, that God would be pleased "shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom," and that Christ would come again in glory to raise their bodies from the grave ; so

that all who have departed this life in the true faith of His Holy Name may have their "perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory." *

As to the employment of the spirits of the righteous in the separate state, we only know this, that the soul of him who has Christ for his portion here, who believes in Him and loves Him, will immediately after death pass into Paradise, and there "rest in Him," and join the blessed company of those who have gone before, and there look for and hasten unto the coming day of gladness, when in the Resurrection they shall enter upon their full majesty of being, in body, soul, and spirit for ever.

Beyond this we cannot penetrate. If St. Paul, who was actually caught up into Paradise, there "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," how can we, in this mortal state, expect a more full revelation?

At the close of a thoughtful and able address,

* See an excellent sermon by Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, on "The Intermediate State."

entitled "Work and Learn," delivered by Sir T. D. Acland, Bart., at Ilfracombe, not long ago, he gave the following interesting anecdote relating to the celebrated Michael Faraday. The anecdote was communicated to Sir Thomas Acland by his brother, Dr. Acland, the eminent physician. Dr. Acland says: "I was travelling from London to Newcastle with Mr. and Mrs. Faraday, about the year 1856. As we approached York, and were just in sight of the Minster, we were discussing some points on the nature of the soul. I said, 'We shall soon be in the Station; will you tell me, before we stop, whether you have any distinct belief as to your own occupation in a future state?' or to that effect. With the intense gaze which all who knew him will remember, he started up, clasped his hands, and said, at each pause of the sentence raising and smiting them together, 'Eye hath not seen—nor hath ear heard—nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive—the things that are prepared for them that love God! I shall be with CHRIST; and that is enough for me.'"

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

ST. PAUL tells us (2 Tim. i. 10) of Jesus Christ that He hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Now when the Apostle here affirms that Jesus Christ abolished death he does not mean that He at once and for ever annihilated death. We need not go far to see that, in such a sense as this, death is not yet abolished. We see not yet all things put under Christ. We see on every side of us the evidences that death still reigns. Even the good and faithful are not exempt from this universal law of mortality. Sooner or later death claims us all. How, then, can it be truly said that Christ Jesus abolished death?

Well, first of all, He overcame death in His own person. He died and rose again the third day. The fetters of death, strong though they were, could not hold Him. It was not possible. "The King sent and delivered Him; the Prince

of the people let Him go free." He partook of flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil. And this He did by dying. He went down into that stronghold. He encountered death in his own territories, and vanquished him. And thus He has given us the assurance that as He has vanquished death for Himself, so is He able to conquer it for us, and to deliver us from the grave. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Then, further: He has taken away the sting of death, which is sin. Sin is the cause of death. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Now the way to remove this universal evil was to take away its cause, which was sin. And Christ died to expiate for human guilt, and to make an atonement for sin. "Now once, in the end of the world, hath He appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." And as though to *make it quite* plain that this was intended as a

remedy for the great evil of death, St. Paul adds, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, so Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many." It appears plain, therefore, that Christ, by abolishing the guilt of sin, has abolished death. He has taken away its power. He has made it harmless to all those who believe in Him. Death will, indeed, continue to reign over the lost. But Christ has taken away from death all power of hindering the gathering in of His redeemed ones into His eternal kingdom. So far, He has abolished death. His resurrection is slowly but surely working out its results. It is now, as we say, only a question of time.

Then, again, He has brought life and immortality (or incorruption) to light. He has thrown a flood of light upon it. He has lighted up man's true and endless life, and the incorruption, the immortality of his whole complex being, in body, soul, and spirit. It might seem, at first, from these words as though life and immortality were things utterly unknown before

the Incarnation. But the true meaning of the expression is what has just been indicated. Our Lord illuminated these great truths. They were truths before, but indistinct truths—truths lost in gloom. But the Sun of Righteousness at His rising removed the clouds and mists that hung over them, and He made them bright and clear.

Even among the Heathen, as has been already noticed, there were certain conjectures and surmises as to a future life after death, conjectures which sometimes seemed to reach the border line of certainty. The general consent of mankind attested the immortality of the soul. And now and then there rose up men gifted above their fellows who seemed fairly to grasp this truth. Socrates, for example, strengthens himself against the terrors of death by the hope that when he left the world he should go to God and live with Him, and keep company with the spirits of good men. And Cicero says, "I believe that the fathers of these *distinguished* men, and my particular friends, are

still alive, and that they live the life which only deserves the name of life." And then he breaks forth with an ecstasy, in language worthy of a Christian, "O glorious day, when I shall go to that Divine council and assembly of spirits—when I shall depart from this confused and tumultuous world, and be gathered to the greatest and best of mankind!"

Now, what was it that led the more intellectual and gifted amongst the Heathen to this conclusion? Well, if we might venture to put ourselves for a moment into the position of those who have never had a revelation—with nothing but natural religion to guide us; if we could only gather our conclusions from our own self-consciousness, might we not reason upwards by some such process as the following: "Here I am, in my own personality, a conscious, reasonable being. I am not made up merely of matter. Mere matter cannot be capable of reasoning. Look at the dead body from which the vital spark has flown. That dead body is not the man. It is its own witness that the

a breach upon the state of nature. "God *mad*
not death, but ungodly men with their work
and words called it to them." And if God mad
man at first immortal, and if death came in a
a shock and surprise upon nature, no wonder tha
nature should stand aghast, astonished at th
fatal change, neither willing to part with th
hopes of immortality, nor yet able to maintai
them. God made man immortal both in bod
and in soul, and planted within him the hope
and the fears which were consistent with suc
a condition. Man by sin made himself liable t
death, and then came confusion and darknes
over his future prospects. But if the coming i
of death darkened the prospect, we see how th
abolition of death throws light upon it. It is t
this, no doubt, that the prophet Isaiah refer
when he exclaims, "He shall destroy in thi
mountain the face of the covering cast over al
people, and the veil spread over all nations."

It is thus, then, that "life and immortality
are illustrated by the abolition of death. Le
me be assured that my body shall rise, an

there is an end of those difficulties which beset me when I reflect that my body must die. Jesus Christ has abolished death, and has thus turned a flood of brightness upon life and immortality. That which was wanting for the clearing of doubts was a grappling with death. It was the showing that there should be no lasting separation between the soul and the body. It was here that the evidence of natural religion was defective, and thus our Blessed Lord supplied the deficiency. He adapted the missing link to the chain of evidence, for He thus demonstrated that the whole man, in the completeness of his composite nature, in body, soul, and spirit, shall reappear at the last day, and be judged before the great tribunal of God. And are we to rejoice in this? Are we to rejoice that we must all appear before the judgment throne? We could not rejoice in this, did we not know that Jesus Christ, by rising again, has not only given us the assurance that we shall rise, but has given us also the hope, through grace, that if, to us "to live is Christ," then to

us also "to die will be gain." We must believe in Him as our sacrifice for sin, and follow Him as our example of godly life; and we can then look forward to our HEREAFTER with a hope to which the highest aspirations of Heathen philosophy could never attain. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

And we thus see how it is that the hopes of a Christian centre in the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We read that "with great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." They knew that everything depended upon this. Infidelity knows it too. And, therefore, in every age assaults have been made upon this fundamental article of our faith; but they have never prevailed, for this truth is founded upon a rock.

Let us consider for a moment the evidences of it. Did Jesus Christ, who was crucified, died, and buried, really rise again from the dead? Well, first of all, His tomb was found empty on the third day. There is no doubt about that. Either then He must have risen, or His body

must have been stolen away. But if stolen, by whom? Not by His enemies; for if so, they would have produced it, to ruin the report of His resurrection. Could it then have been removed by His disciples? Would they, timid and feeble as we know they were, have ventured to oppose the Jewish council, or have dared to face the band of soldiers set to guard the sepulchre?

The sepulchre was found empty. That is our first point. Where then was the body of Jesus? Where was that sacred deposit? Could He really be risen? The fact was too stupendous, too amazing, to be readily believed. But by degrees the evidence of it accumulated and prevailed. The first favoured witness was Mary Magdalene, to whom He showed Himself as she stood weeping at the sepulchre. Then other women; then the two disciples as they were on their way to Emmaus. Then Simon Peter; then the eleven; then Thomas, "who for the more confirmation of the faith" was suffered at first to be doubtful; afterwards, 500 brethren

at once. Surely no greater evidence can be required than all these are able to give us. And they saw for themselves, and for us also; that the certainty of this great fact, the resurrection of Jesus, might be proclaimed by the Church to the end of time.

They were simple, true-hearted men, these witnesses of the resurrection; and they were simple facts which they declared. It was a plain, unadorned account which they gave. There were no rhetorical efforts, no attempts to gild the gold of their statements. It was simply this, that they had with their own eyes, in different places, at different times, seen their risen Lord. They who knew Him before His crucifixion, knew Him again. The voice, the form, the features, were the same. They had been allowed to handle Him. They had seen the print of the nails in His hands, the scar which the spear had left when it pierced His side. They had eaten and drunk with Him.

Had they anything in the world to gain by declaring this truth? On the contrary, they had

much to lose. And yet they were constant and united, preaching it all their lives, and stoutly maintaining it in their deaths. Surely, if there is any use in history, any confidence in men, any truth in human intercourse, the resurrection of Jesus is compassed about with evidence which must convince as long as there is any sense, or reason, or faith in the world.

But it will be said, perhaps, that this multitude of witnesses were deceived; that they were credulous; that they were enthusiasts. Were they credulous? Were they enthusiasts? Let us follow them to the day of Pentecost. A few weeks have now passed away, and the novelty of the event has a little worn off. Are they still dreaming? Let us stand in thought by them, and listen to their defence. You refuse to believe us, they say; you think that we are all labouring under some delusion; that we fancy we have seen a man whom we have not seen—eaten with a man with whom we have not eaten—conversed with a man with whom we have not conversed. Do

you disbelieve us? Bring out your sick, your blind, your lame. Fetch hither your dead. We will heal the sick, restore sight to the blind. We will make the lame to walk; we will raise the dead. Confront us with Parthians and Medes and Elamites. We, although illiterate and unlearned men, will speak to them in their own languages. We will explain prophecies, unfold the mysteries of the Gospel, penetrate the deep things of God. Was there any deception here?

And then mark the result. The resurrection of Jesus was so clearly established, that His religion prevailed throughout the then known world. The Cross, from having been the emblem of shame, became the symbol of honour. It was worn on the breast, it was painted on standards, it floated in the breeze on triumphal banners, it formed the ornament of imperial crowns. No objection could arrest the progress of Christianity, no enemy could destroy it. In sunshine and in storm it still advanced. The reason and the conscience of men were con*strained to confess* its power; and amid the

sceptic's scorn, and the world's indifference, it was demonstrated by the multitude of those who believed, and by the courage of those who suffered, that "He who was dead now lives again." And let us never forget that the resurrection of Christ Jesus is the proof as well as the earnest of *our* resurrection. The destiny of all true Christians is linked with that of Jesus. "Because I live ye shall live also." By the resurrection of Jesus the human nature is restored, and lifted to a higher position than even that from which it fell. Death is now swallowed up in victory. It is disarmed of its sting. Jesus has changed the name of death, and he bids us call it sleep. What sleep is to waking, that death is to the resurrection. It is only a transition state, as bringing in a mightier power of life, and therefore it is called sleep, to show that it has a fixed end coming. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead; and therefore we shall rise. He did not die or rise again as a private person, but as the great representative of human nature. His resurrection has a com-

manding force to compel the resurrection of all mankind; "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I doubt much whether this great article of faith, "the resurrection of the body," obtains its due share of attention amongst us. We are accustomed, and rightly too, to look upon those who have departed this life in the faith of Christ as being at once admitted into a state of conscious happiness. And, in the ordinary, though somewhat loose, language of modern theology, they are spoken of as having gone to heaven. We do not quarrel with this mode of expression, if all that is meant by it is this, that "the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity." But we deny that it represents the whole truth. The Bible teaches us that the body is to be glorified as well as the soul; and that the happiness of the soul will be incomplete until re-united to the body. Hence we learn that we have an incalculable interest in the great truth that the dead are to rise. The Lord of glory shed His

blood for the redemption of the body; and he now holds the keys of death and hell, that He may guard every atom of its dust when dissolved and broken up through separation from the soul; so that the dead in Christ are not only to live with Him for awhile in their spirits in Paradise, but they are to live with Him hereafter in the glories of the resurrection, in body, soul, and spirit in heaven. This it is that makes the triumph complete. We have seen that as originally created, in the image of his Maker, man was a compound being, matter and spirit. And it is essential to his perfection hereafter that he should be renewed unto the same image throughout eternity. And therefore it is necessary, in order to the completion of Christ's work of redemption, that the body should rise. It puts a kind of sacredness upon the body, to regard it as destined with the spirit to the glories of eternity; not to be thrown aside—not to be burnt, and its ashes put into a heathen urn, when its inhabitant has left it, and taken flight into Paradise—but

carefully to be laid up in the wardrobe of the grave, that it may rise purified, and again receive its inhabitant, whose dwelling-place it will be for ever in the light of God's presence.

CHAPTER V.

JUDGMENT TO COME.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment;" such is, I believe, the literal rendering of the Apostle's words (Heb. ix. 27); and it adds to the force of them that they are introduced, as it were, *obiter* into his argument, and by way of illustration. He takes his example from that which is a universally accepted and well-known truth—namely, the death of all men, and the judgment which will follow after death. Just as certainly as I shall die, so as certainly shall I be judged. So in this same Epistle, at chap. vi. 2, he speaks of "eternal judgment" as one of the elementary

principles of the Gospel of Christ; and he calls it eternal because its consequences are eternal.

We need not trouble ourselves with any speculations as to the interval that may elapse between death and judgment. It is sufficient for all real and practical purposes to know that after death, the next thing before us is judgment. This is the appointed destiny of every human being. As certainly as we shall die, so certainly shall we be judged by God's appointed methods, and at God's appointed time.

I assume, in what I am about to say on this subject, the great truth of the immortality of the soul. I assume, at least, that man lives after death. Unless this is freely conceded, there is little room for argument as to human accountableness. But assuming that man lives after death, I want to know whether his condition in this life is such that he may justly be held to be accountable for his actions. Now, there are two arguments which are perhaps most frequently urged against the doctrine of human

responsibility. One is, that man is not a fre agent ; the other, that, even if he is a fre agent, he is too weak and too ignorant to b responsible.

First, then, as to the free agency of mai Every one has heard of what is called fatalisn or the doctrine of necessity. We are told thi everything happens by an inexorable and immu table law ; that there is a regular succession c cause and effect in the Universe, and that ther fore things cannot by any possibility be differer from what they are ; that we have no pow over actions, and therefore none over events that we can act in one way only and arrive a one result ; that we are, in fact, mere machine set a-going, with no power of self-regulatio and acting only according to certain fixed an unchangeable laws. Now, this doctrine c necessity, if it be true at all, must be true un versally. We must apply it to everything, if w accept it at all. Well, then, we see at once thi it is not true in the ordinary affairs of life. *is not true* that in matters of every-day li

things are altogether beyond our control. The fields do not produce corn whether we sow corn or not; and it makes some difference whether we put out a fire or suffer it to burn. If we hold the doctrine of necessity, let us at least be consistent. If a man is a fatalist, he must be a fatalist in everything. We cannot allow him to hold and to reject the doctrine at will—to hold it when it falls in with his inclinations, and to reject it when it does not suit his convenience. We say, then, that this doctrine will not stand the test in matters of ordinary life, and therefore we may well suspect it when it is applied to matters of religion.

But it will be urged, Have men any real liberty of action? Are they not the creatures of circumstance? Are they not under an irresistible bias? Will they not of necessity act in one way, and not in another? To this we answer emphatically, No. Man is a being who can be influenced by motives, and a being who is capable of being influenced by motives cannot be a being influenced by blind necessity. Let

us judge for ourselves. Are we not consci
that when we do many things we might forb
to do them?—that if a greater inducement
held out to us not to do them than to do th
we should forbear to do them? Well, then,
actions are so far free that we may justly
held to be accountable. We could not be h
accountable if we could exercise no choice
tween doing and not doing. But we do exer
a choice; and often, after balancing the *p*
and *cons*, as they are called—after a debate
passed through the mind, whether the th
proposed to be done shall be done or not,
action ultimately follows the last guiding cho
of the will. Perhaps it will be said that
motives are always stronger on the one s
than on the other, so that practically a man
only a machine. But no; the motives are
stronger on the one side than on the oth
Rather, there is superior strength on one si
and that side is the side of virtue, not of v
Do what we will, struggle against the sense
accountableness as we will, conscience sugg

the imagery of judgment to come. We feel dissatisfaction, we experience remorse, when we have done wrong; we feel contentment and comfort when we have done right. Then, what a delusion it is to urge that the stronger motives are all on the side of vice, as though men were not free to follow the high demands of truth and holiness. Men may be drawn different ways, but neither way irresistibly; and therefore they are free, notwithstanding the motives by which they are influenced.

We thus see that in the mighty and mysterious drama in which we are all taking our part in this world—a drama made up of God's providence and our free will, concurrently and interchangeably acting—God means, in order to the last great act of this drama—the final judgment—to let men go on playing their parts according to their own will, and yet, within certain limits, under the supreme control of His hand. And therefore it does not often please Him, by present manifestations, whether of power or of anger, to intercept the course of

human actions; more especially when we remember that the final doom of a man is not to be grounded on single actions, but upon the whole course of his life.

But there is another argument sometimes urged against human accountableness—namely, the ignorance and weakness of man, so that he can hardly discover the right, or follow it if discovered.

Well, it certainly must diminish the degree in which creatures are responsible, if they are left greatly in the dark as to the will of that Being to whom they are to give account; or if, when that will is known, they are in great measure without the capacity for obedience. Our Lord Himself has told us that unto whomsoever little is given, from him shall little be required. There is an end of all moral government, unless a strict proportion be kept between the requirements of the ruler and the powers and opportunities of the subject. St. Paul has settled this question for all believers in Revelation in these memorable words: "As many as have sinned without law,

shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned under the law, shall be judged by the law." These words show plainly that accountableness varies with advantages, and that there will be different standards for different circumstances. But we cannot find anywhere a tribe of human beings without any moral sense at all. We may find them in various degrees of degradation, no doubt ; but the moral sense is only weakened or overlaid even in the most degraded. The late eminent Dr. Darwin, after having visited the south coast of Patagonia many years ago, expressed his opinion that it was impossible to discover the moral sense in the degraded inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, and that it was hopeless to attempt to enlighten them. But he saw reason afterwards to change his opinion ; and with that high sense of justice and honour which marked his whole character, he became subsequently a warm supporter of Christian missions to these poor savages.

These, however, are extreme cases. With regard, however, to ourselves (for we may leave

the untutored heathen to the mercies of Him who, as Judge of all the earth, will do right), shall any plead that he cannot be accountable for his actions, because he is left without sufficient information as to his duty, or sufficient strength for its performance? There is no one possessed of reason who is not also possessed of conscience. Conscience may sometimes be ill-informed and ill-regulated. But in the main, conscience is right. Its uniform testimony is on the side of judgment to come—a judgment when every action will be fairly weighed and righteously recompensed. Its testimony is always this—that we must act up to our knowledge, or we must expect punishment for our neglect. There are, indeed, those who would maintain that men have their notions of right and wrong and their apprehensions of future judgment only because preachers and ministers of religion have, for their own purposes, built up a fabric of superstition. But no; the apprehension of future judgment is not the produce of ministers of religion. It would be more

correct to say that ministers of religion are the produce of this apprehension. Mankind have always recognised some form of religious belief, because mankind have always had conscience; so that it is not the Clergy who have created conscience. It is rather this: that conscience, which is the voice of God speaking within man, has shown the necessity that there should be an order of men appointed to show the way of salvation. There is a light, the light of Heaven, vouchsafed to all; and there is a voice which is audible by all, unless they wilfully close their eyes and their ears; and there is a power in all to attempt to walk by that light and to obey that voice.

This is a worse danger than superstition, and is scepticism. Superstition may tempt a man to add to or to degrade what God has revealed. But scepticism will lead him to take away from what God has revealed, and so to come at length to believe in nothing—in nothing, at least, but what we see with our eyes.

This is a matter of far deeper moment than

it may appear at first sight. For if the belief in human responsibility is once weakened or undermined, the most powerful security for national order, liberty, and peace is endangered. There are many fallacies freely circulated on these subjects in the present day. There are shrewd debaters, and there are shallow and credulous listeners, who think themselves very clever because they can repeat, at second-hand, arguments, which have been answered over and over again, against all that Christians hold most dear. And it is well that we should be able to defend our faith; to give a reason for the hope that is in us; and to show that the modern objections to Christianity are not really modern, but only the old fallacies which have been a hundred times refuted. In spite of the scorn and derision of a few, the reason and conscience of mankind unite in attesting with Holy Scripture the truth of human responsibility and of future judgment.

We will suppose, then, that the end of things has come. The sun has risen on this earth for the last time. All things are continuing as they

were. The children of this world are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling and getting gain; when, lo! a clear and thrilling blast from an unearthly trumpet rends the Universe; and a voice, such as was never heard from human lips, proclaims to the utmost bounds of creation that "the day of the Lord" is come. Behold, then, the great white throne descending from heaven, enveloped in the fiery cloud, and girt about with the innumerable host of angels. Behold that awful Presence before which the heavens and the earth flee away. The deepening roll of the archangel's trumpet calls to the mountain, the sea, the desert to give up their dead. The earth heaves with strong convulsions, and the innumerable multitude of all generations start from the sleep of death, and present themselves, amid the wreck and the crash of dissolving elements, before the dread tribunal. They see the Judge, the Lord Jesus! Every eye beholds Him, and they, too, who pierced Him! He, from whom nothing can be hidden, is about to

sit in scrutiny on their conduct. He is about to bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and to make manifest the counsels of the heart. A sudden blaze of light will then expose all, and make it clear to the astonishment of an assembled universe that "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." There are many whose conduct, so far as it meets the eye of the world, is irreproachable. But what about the thoughts—what about the counsels—of the heart? Is there one, however high his morals, or honourable his dealings, who would like to have the counsels of his heart laid open to the world? Surely this consideration ought to overthrow every confidence but that which is based on the merits and mediation of Christ. No living man could bear this scrutiny unless he has applied by faith to his conscience that Blood which cleanseth from all sin; unless he looks from day to day to Jesus Christ the righteous, as his Advocate with the Father. Oh! let us hasten; and Christ will be a covert from the tempest in that dread-

ul day; and then nothing shall harm us: and vhile the sea roars and the earth trembles, we hall lift up our heads, knowing that our re-lemption draweth nigh.

"Little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and ıot be ashamed before Him at His coming."

'The Spirit and the Bride say, Co.ne; and let ıim that is athirst come. He which testifieth hese things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FINAL AWARD.

'DEPART, ye cursed!" "Come, ye blessed!" Fidelity to God's revealed truth compels me ıere to say one word upon a subject which can ıever be approached without a sense of pain, ınd never quitted without a feeling of relief. But our Blessed Lord, who knew far better than

we can know, the full force and meaning of the words which He uttered, has assured us in two brief but pregnant sentences that as there is an eternity of happiness, so is there an eternity of misery in the future. "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." We cannot grasp eternity. But this at least we must admit, that whatever the word "eternal" means in one clause of this verse, the same meaning must be assigned to it in the other. The Greek word in each clause is the same, and therefore, according to every principle of correct exegesis, whatever be the amount of duration intended in the one clause, the same amount must be intended in the other. Men may speculate as to the meaning of eternity; but if the Greek word means "endless duration" in one sentence, it must mean "endless duration" in the other sentence. I dismiss this part of the subject with the striking words of Cornelius à Lapide: "I beseech you, O reader, by the mercies of God, by your own *salvation, by* that one little life entrusted to you

and committed to your care, that you will ever keep before your eyes the living memory, as of eternity and of eternal torments, so also of the eternal joys on the other side offered to you by God, and concerning which you have cast the die, and that irrevocable." Oh, may we so live here, that our HEREAFTER may be that happy life which knows no ending!

At the same time let us beware how we judge of our final condition by any imaginations of our own, or any prying into God's secret counsels. Our Blessed Lord, when He was requested that He would grant to the two sons of Zebedee that they might be in the highest places of honour in His Kingdom, declined to answer the request, and only revealed to them what concerned their duty and their trials, leaving the final award to be revealed in the future. These are the great secrets of the Kingdom, hidden and sealed in the counsels of eternity. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal: "The Lord knoweth them that are His;" and "Let every-

one that nameth the name of Christ, depa
from iniquity." Observe; the inscription
here twofold. The first part teaches the for
knowledge of God; the second part teaches t
obedience of man; and both impressions mu
be stamped upon him who is making his calli
and election sure. If we are anxious to kn
what God has decreed concerning us, He h
shown us where we may safely look, namely,
the Holy Scriptures, and to our own conscienc
We have been baptised into Christ; and the
fore in the designs of God, and in the purpos
of the redemption wrought for us by His Sc
we are the sons of God and the inheritors
His Kingdom. But His final decree concerni
each individual he keeps secret, until t
Messenger of the covenant shall declare t
unalterable sentence at the last great day.

And this he has kept hidden till then in H
infinite wisdom, lest we should presume up
our present privileges. For, indeed, how ma
there are who fancy themselves secure becau
they have been baptised. They think the

selves to be in a state of grace when, alas! they are not. Others, on the other hand, who have far better reason to think themselves in the right, are in fear and trembling lest they should be in the wrong. We may, however, take this as an encouraging thought, that in proportion as we grow in grace we may feel an ever-increasing hope as to the certainty of our future reward.

At the same time we must not lose sight of the vast number of precepts in Holy Scripture given to those who are in a state of grace, to exhort them to perseverance. "He that endureth to the end," and he only, "shall be saved." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." God's promises are indeed the objects of our faith; but the final salvation of our souls, which is consequent upon our own perseverance, can, at the best, be but the object of our hope. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus:" but observe the following sentence, "who walk, not after the

flesh, but after the Spirit." I think, however, that it may safely be affirmed that to some faithful Christians there is vouchsafed a comfortable persuasion, founded upon long habits of piety and devotion to God, that they are indeed in the right way that leadeth to everlasting life. But, on the other hand, there are those who, although they are in a state of confirmed grace, do not always know it. There are some of whom we might almost say that it is morally impossible that they should fall. They do not know it; and the highest assurance to which they can reach lies in these words: "Notwithstanding, though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in Thee." The greater number of faithful Christians, however, are probably for the most part in this condition. They see their own frailties and inconsistencies on the one side; but then they see the tender mercies of God on the other. They oscillate between hope and fear. The cloud gives light on the one side; but it is dark on the other. And thus they are kept humble and diligent—ever pressing onwards,

and ever looking upwards—striving to do their duty, and longing for heaven; "working out their own salvation with fear and trembling," and yet feeling that it is God that "worketh in them." Look at the example of St. Paul. In one of his Epistles, written at an early period in his Christian life, he expresses his fear lest he should be rejected at the last (1 Cor ix. 27), and therefore he used severe discipline upon his body. But in a later Epistle we find him more hopeful as to his final condition. "I am persuaded," he says, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans viii. 38, 39). But again, at a still later period, when his end was near, he says to Timothy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day"

(2 Tim. ii. 7. 8). Henceforth St. Paul knew no more fear; his love was perfect, and it cast out all fear. Such a hope as this is of course only given to the highest faith and the strongest love. But we must be thankful, if in any measure we have reached a well-grounded persuasion that we are "walking in the Spirit;" and that our hope of the final reward is to us as "an anchor of the soul, *a hope* both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAPPY HEREAFTER.

ALTHOUGH enough has already been said in these pages to show how little it is possible for us in the present state of existence to realise the future, we may find some ground for comforting assurance, and some true motive power in the thought, that in the future state of glory there will be at least these sources of happi-

ness: (1) Absolute freedom from sin for ever; (2) A vast increase and continual growth in knowledge; (3) Communion with all the company of heaven; (4) The sight of Christ and of God.

(1) ABSOLUTE FREEDOM FROM SIN FOR EVER. —There is a power here by which, as fallen creatures, we are all naturally held in bondage. We are all in this life in a greater or less degree tied and bound with the chains of our sins—chains fine and yet powerful—chains which so adapt themselves to every movement of the captive, that even while he wears them he often fancies himself free. But Christ has introduced us to liberty—to freedom from the harsh bondage and the degrading yoke of sin. It was for this purpose that He came into the world. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," He says by His prophet, "because He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Indeed, the very word "redemption" implies this. To redeem is to recover by purchase, or

to ransom from some usurping tyrant. And this is what Christ the Lord has done. He, who from all eternity was one with the Father, was pleased, in the fulness of time, to take the manhood into the Divine nature, and having become a Man, but a Man in whom there dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, He first fulfilled all that the law commanded, and then suffered all that the law demanded, and all for us and in our stead; and, hence, God is pleased to pardon all our former sins by reason of Christ's satisfaction for them, and so to accept of His death instead of ours, thereby justifying or setting free from the guilt of sin all those who believe, and who, believing, are baptised into His Name.

But Christ has done more than this for us. Through the covenant of grace into which we have been admitted, the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to us, whereby not only the guilt of sin is removed, but its power is weakened and gradually subdued. The bond of sin is broken. His Spirit has made us free, and therefore "we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the

flesh." We must live a spiritual life here by continual prayer and watchfulness, and by the constant use of the means of grace, and especially by feeding upon Christ by faith in the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood, whereby, if we receive it worthily, "we are one with Him" and He is "one with us." Thus only can we hope to reach the condition of perfect liberty. We have indeed been admitted within the realm of the glorious liberty of the Sons of God; but the emancipation is not yet complete. Do we not continually feel within ourselves the tendency to rebel against the free service of God—to return to the hateful condition of the slave? The devices and desires of our own hearts, the contagion of evil example, the temptations of Satan and of the world—all these dangers are continually threatening us; and thousands there are who, though they have been baptised, and invested with all the privileges of their Father's home, are nevertheless wearing the marks of servitude.

If any one who is reading these pages is

conscious to himself that he is held fast by some secret sin, let him ponder these words of our Blessed Lord: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." They tell you that your Deliverer is at hand. It matters not that you may have sinned against light and knowledge. Every sin, truly repented of and forsaken, can be hidden in the wounds of Christ. You have His promise on your side. Sin may and will struggle for the mastery, and there may be moments when, through infirmity of the flesh or want of watchfulness, it may seem to triumph. But to him who repents, and believes, and obeys, the victory is sure. The darkness is passing away, and the true light is shining in. The prison-doors are opening; the day of complete redemption is at hand. Let us therefore stand fast in the liberty with which Christ makes us free, until of His mercy we are for ever removed from the power of sin in the glorious HEREAFTER, and in the perfection of body, soul, and spirit in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

(2) WE LOOK FORWARD HEREAFTER TO A VAST INCREASE AND CONTINUAL GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE.—St. Paul (1 Cor. xiii.), writing of the future as contrasted with the present, says: "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." There is a little mingling of metaphor here. The words "through a glass," or "in a mirror," refer to vision; the word "darkly," or "in a riddle," as it is in the original Greek, refers to hearing. So that the imagery may be explained thus: In this life we both see and hear imperfectly. The Divine attributes are reflected to us in the mirror of Nature by such manifestations as we are capable of receiving here. So also we have in Revelation a dim outline of the Divine purposes and works in our redemption. They are indeed as riddles or dark sentences, sufficient indeed for the saving of our souls if we will believe, but not sufficient for the solving of our doubts if we will dispute. But HEREAFTER we shall see

face to face; that is, not by faint reflections, but by direct intuition. "Then shall we fully know, even as we have ourselves been fully known."

These and other expressions in Holy Scripture clearly intimate to us that in this life we are, so to speak, in the very childhood of our being. Our full manhood is yet to come; it is reserved for another and a loftier state of existence. When a full-grown man attempts to review the fancies and the pursuits of his youth, he will probably discover a number of wild notions which he would now be ashamed to entertain, and a number of foolish ideas which he has long ago put aside. He finds, too, that many things which were then obscure and unintelligible to him are now become plain things which then surprised him are now no longer the occasion of wonder. Thus will it be with us in the great HEREAFTER. We shall then look back upon earthly pleasures, riches, honours as mere baubles—children's toys with which it is astonishing that we could

have been pleased. Yes; there is a striking analogy between the two conditions. What the boy in time is to the man in time, that the man in time will be to the man in eternity. And it should serve to keep us humble, to abate in us too high notions of our own wisdom and understanding, to restrain in us anything like harshness or contempt towards those who may differ from us in opinion; to consider that hereafter we may look back upon some of these things as we now look back upon some of the trifling pursuits of our childhood.

(3) Another most interesting element in the happiness of our state of being hereafter will be a HAPPY COMMUNION WITH ALL THE COMPANY OF HEAVEN.

There will be a renewal of intercourse with those who have been our relations and friends in this life. I do not mean that it will be necessary, in order to the perfect happiness of heaven, that we should there have the presence of those who have been the special objects of our affection on earth. In that glorious HERE-

AFTER "God will be all in all." The Divin presence will infinitely compensate for any thing of earth that we may miss there. Bu what I mean is this, that if friends and relation meet in that kingdom of bliss, they will kno one another again. There will be mutua recognition, and they will derive from thei reunion new elements of joy and gladnes They will meet where everything which em bittered life on earth will have disappeared, an everything that gladdened it will be purifie and intensified.

But not only shall we have companionshi with these—with fathers, mothers, brother sisters, husbands, wives—with friends whos companionship has been so precious to us here we shall also be admitted to loving intercours with those whose faces we have never see in the flesh—with those who have bee separated from us on earth by distance, or b a long series of generations—but whose cha racters have influenced us, or whose writing have elevated us—with the noble, the intellectua

and the saintly ones of every age. With all these we shall be brought into communion. We shall know them by Divine intuition.

In the transfiguration of our Blessed Lord the three privileged disciples who were with Him seem at once, amidst the splendours of that scene, to have known Moses and Elijah. The same Divine power which favoured them with a vision of the other world gave them a supernatural conception of what they saw. And hence we may perhaps infer that, in the great HEREAFTER, there will not only be recognition, but knowledge at once imparted, of those whose faces we have never seen in the flesh, but by whose example or writings we may have benefited. The myriads of the redeemed and saved will make up but one family, each knowing and known by the other. So that though there may be a warmer and closer bond uniting us throughout eternity with those who have been our companions in the house of our pilgrimage, and with whom we have taken sweet counse together on earth, yet the heart of each will

have then enlarged so as to embrace all in one hallowed and eternal friendship.

(4) One thought yet remains. In the glorious HEREAFTER WE SHALL SEE CHRIST AND GOD.

In the present state of being we are not favoured with any immediate manifestations of Deity. We see Him by reflection. Creation is a mirror in which He gives back to us some faint though faithful images of His glorious attributes and perfections. Even these "lower works" declare "His goodness beyond thought, and power Divine." He, the uncreated Beauty, Himself invisible, makes Himself manifest to us in the things which we see and hear. The ample firmament, the "vasty deep," the solid earth, the cheering light, the music of the birds, the harmonies of time, all that is fair and beautiful in the things around us, is an image of Deity. Even the tiniest insect or flower reflects some rays of Him. "Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy Glory."

But we have a yet brighter and more striking reflection of God than this. The Lord Jesus

Christ is called "the image of the invisible God." He is the image, the "solid and express" image, of Him who is not and cannot be seen otherwise; and never can we be too thankful for this manifestation. As He who is Himself perfect God and perfect man moved about upon this earth, He made known the Father, in all His wonderful attributes, His love, His power, His wisdom, His holiness; but more especially His love, His inestimable love, in saving us from our sins. We look with the deepest reverence and gratitude to Him, and we find rest and peace when our souls

> "turn to His great love on high,
> Whose arms to clasp us on the Cross were spread."

But though God has come thus near to us in the person of Christ, still how incomprehensible He is, how past finding out! This may arise in great measure from our seeing Him thus—only by reflected rays and not by direct. But hereafter "we shall see Him as He is." How shall this be? How do we reconcile this with the Apostle's words, "No man hath seen nor can

see God?" It is probable that this language applies to the bodily organs of vision, to which can be revealed only the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ, which will doubtless be the greatest source of praise and thanksgiving and adoring love to the redeemed in heaven. But when we read that the "pure in heart shall see God," and that "we shall see Him as He is," we must understand this to mean the beatific vision of God, and that Divine perception which will be vouchsafed to the saints hereafter.

There is doubtless more, far more, in all this than we can possibly understand in our present state. But we may at least satisfy ourselves that by the phrase "seeing God" is to be understood the whole enjoyment of the life to come, so far as it is possible for a created being to enjoy it; just as by the phrase "seeing the sun" is set forth the entire enjoyment of this life.

But, indeed, there is something very wonderful in the expression. We know that our eyes represent to us an object with far greater clearness and preciseness than any other sense can

do. The light which discovers both itself and all things else is discovered only by seeing; and thus the Psalmist declares of God, "With Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light;" and St. John's words (i. 4), are the echo of these, where he says of Christ: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Even in this present world, these words hold true. Christ is the "Light" of men through the medium of "Life." But the true light can only be discerned by those who live in it. "The believing soul lives in an element of light, which at once quickens and satisfies the spiritual faculty, whereby heaven and heavenly things are realised." And if this is so here, where we live in cloud and shadow, and are compassed with infirmity, what will it be hereafter? God will then manifest Himself so plainly and distinctly, He will so open His glorious perfections to the understanding, that we shall then know Him as clearly and fully as we now know those things which we see with our eyes. We know that in this life the sense of seeing is the sense of pleasure

and delight. "Truly," says the wise man, "the light is sweet; and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." We know, too, how much greater joy it is to see a friend than only to receive communications from him. And in like manner, because the full enjoyment of God is the highest pleasure and the purest delight, how could it be better set forth to us than by the simple, but pregnant, phrase, "they shall see God." Think what boundless, what inexhaustible pleasure the eye affords us in this life. How minute and penetrating is its power; how closely it can scan the smallest of the Creator's works! Then how wide a range it can take! How it sweeps over, and drinks in, the beauties of this lower world! yea, how it mounts up to the starry height, and gathers in the brilliance of the host of heaven, darting as in a moment through the wide realms of space, and visiting planets and stars whose distances baffle all our powers of arithmetic. Such is the figure by which our Saviour would represent to us the enjoyment of God in glory. Oh, what a day of

gladness will that be to the "pure in heart." They shall see God! Drawn up into the burning brightness of that presence which they have seen "as in a mirror and darkly" here, they shall shine for ever in the Redeemer's likeness, and be for ever satisfied. They shall see God! They shall see such a vision as neither the eye hath seen, nor the ear hath heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive; a vision far transcending all earthly delights, surpassing the beauty of gold and silver—of forest and plain—of hill and valley—of sea and air—of sun and moon—surpassing the beauty of angels—surpassing all things else, because it is by this vision that all things else are beautiful.

"It may very well be," says St. Augustine ("City of God," Book xxii. 29), "that we shall in the future world see the material forms of the new heaven and the new earth in such a way that we shall most distinctly recognise God, everywhere present and governing all things, material as well as spiritual; and that we shall see Him, not as now we understand the invisible things of

God, by the things which are made, and see Him darkly, as in a mirror and in part, and rather by faith than by bodily vision of material appearances, but by means of the bodies which we wear, and which we shall see wherever we turn our eyes."

Again, a little further on, he says, "God will be so known by us, and shall be so much before us, that we shall see Him by the spirit in ourselves, in one another, in Himself, in the new heavens and the new earth, in every created thing which shall then exist; and also by the body, we shall see Him in every body which the keen vision of the eye of the spiritual body shall reach."

Then, and not till then, shall we know how great is the goodness which God has prepared for them that love Him. In that eternal HEREAFTER we shall rest and see, and see and love, and love and praise.

May the thought of these things, and of the ineffable vision of "the King in His beauty," *inspire* our hearts with an increasing love of

that righteousness which leads to Him. Then, when we wake up from the sleep of death after His likeness, shall every desire be satisfied, with the fulness of joy, and the exceeding abundance of unutterable glory.

The remainder of this little Volume (Part II.) will be devoted to the consideration of the important question, HOW TO PREPARE FOR MY HEREAFTER.

Part II.—How to Prepare for my Hereafter.

CHAPTER I.

PURITY OF INTENTION.

PURITY of intention may be regarded as the foundation and mainspring of our preparation for the happiness of heaven. This grace is so excellent that it sanctifies the commonest actions of our life, and so important that without it the highest service that we can render to God is not only imperfect but sinful.

It is therefore most important that in every action of our lives we should have respect to the end, so that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. It will be a great help to us in the various actions and pursuits of the day to think thus—"Now I am God's servant; I am doing my Master's business; I am not at my own dis-

posal; I am using His gifts; let His be the glory, and then the reward will be mine."

We may, I think, take these, amongst others, as signs of purity of intention. (1) Do we find ourselves more earnest in actions or duties which concern our spiritual welfare than in those which affect our temporal interests? He who pursues the business or the pleasure of this life with zeal and activity, while he enters upon the duties of religion with languor and without appetite, may well fear that his heart is not right with God, but that it cleaves too closely to the world. (2) Another sign of purity of intention is, when we love virtue for God's sake and for its own. But if we are envious of the virtues or excellencies of others, this is a sad sign that our intentions are polluted. When Joshua, out of his zeal for the honour of Moses, desired that Eldad and Medad should be forbidden to prophesy, Moses rebuked him in the words, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" N

Moses had sought only his own honour, he have prophesied alone. But it was a s gift of God's grace to Moses that he was meek; and though it is probable that meekness had tempted some to presume his forbearance, yet he was enabled to re his anger, and to intercede with God for who had done him wrong—God thus, as it "honouring His own gifts." He who is p intention desires only that the cause of shall prosper, and is pleased when it do whoever may be the instrument. Let us then for purity of intention and sincer purpose in all that we do, beseeching Him whom no secrets are hid, to cleanse the thc of our hearts by the inspiration of His Spirit, that we may perfectly love Him worthily magnify His holy Name.

CHAPTER II.

A CONSTANT SENSE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

THAT God is everywhere present—that He sees everything, hears everything, understands every thought, is the necessary correlative of the belief in God, as He is presented to every right-minded person by the testimony of his own conscience, and by the consent of all nations, no less than by God Himself in Holy Scripture. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?" "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" "In Him we live and move and have our being."

There are many senses and ways in which God may be understood to be present. But it is well to remember that he is present in the consciences of all men, both the good and the evil; and He is present there by way of testimony and of judgment, ever speaking to us through our consciences, rebuking us when we

do evil, and comforting us when we do well. Then further He is specially present in the hearts of His people by His Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Now the great point is to be ever mindful of this; and especially in the exercises of religion. Then more especially ought we by an act of faith to place ourselves in His immediate presence, and to fix our desires upon Him, as the object of our worship, and the source of our blessing. "He walks," says Bishop Taylor, "in the presence of God who converses with him in frequent prayer and frequent communion, who opens all his desires to Him, who weeps before Him for his sins, who asks remedy and support for his weakness, who obeys Him as a Father, and loves Him as a Patron." If we walk with God in all His ways, as He walks with us in ours, we shall find perpetual reason for rejoicing in the Lord. It was said by one of old, "There is one way of overcoming our spiritual enemies, namely, spiritual joy,

and a perpetual keeping of God in our minds."

Let us then every day, and as much as we can every hour of every day, try to keep ourselves in the presence of God; and to dedicate our thoughts, our words, and our actions, to Him, to be blessed by His providence, and sanctified by His Spirit.

A Prayer (Bp. Jeremy Taylor).

O Almighty God, infinite and eternal; Thou fillest all things with Thy presence. Teach me to walk always as in Thy presence, to fear Thy majesty, to reverence Thy wisdom and omniscience; that I may never dare to commit any sin in the eye of my Lord and my Judge; but that I may with so much care and reverence demean myself, that my Judge may not be my Accuser, but my Advocate; that I, expressing my belief in Thy presence here by careful walking, may feel the effects of it hereafter, in the participation of eternal glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

REPENTANCE.

REPENTANCE, according to the Greek original, means a "change of mind"; and certainly the change which it produces, when it is genuine, is beyond reckoning. For even the unchanging God, who is not a man that He should repent, is pleased to say, in condescension to our weak understanding, that He changes also upon man's repentance, that He alters His decree, lifting up the sinner from death to life, from hell to heaven. If we are absolved here, we shall be absolved there; if we repent, He will repent: and not send upon us the evil which we hac deserved.

What then is repentance?

1. In the first place, he that repents truly, greatly sorrowful with a real and bitter sorr for his past sins. His sorrow will be like t *of David*, when he mourned for his crying s

of murder and adultery; or like that of Peter, after his shameful denying of his Master

2. A true penitent must confess his sins, and humble himself before God for them. And such confession has a special promise attaching to it. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God has pledged Himself to pardon us, if we duly confess our sins, and follow up this confession of them by a steadfast purpose to forsake them. But in this duty it is very important to remember, that we have to work out our salvation "with fear and trembling." Moreover, every new sin and every grievous departure from the ways of God, increase God's anger; so that even although in the end He may have mercy upon us, yet on account of our repeated sin He may send some sad judgment upon us. And thus we must never cease to pray for pardon, even to the end. For although God may in His mercy have forgiven us, we may not always know it; and therefore we must still pray, and still be watch-

ful; and then we may hope that these beginnings of Divine mercy will at last be consummated in the day of the Lord.

3. Whatever we do, let us never put off repentance to a more convenient season. It is no easy matter to root out the habits of sin, which, it may be, have become confirmed through a whole life. But if God be for us, who can be against us? It was for me that Christ died. It is for me that He now intercedes at the right hand of God. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." O blessed Saviour, hide my sins in Thy wounds, and bury them in Thy grave, and let me rise in the life of grace, and abide and grow in it, until I arrive at the Kingdom of Glory. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH.

FAITH is excellently described by the Apostle (Hebrews xi.) as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; or, as the words might be more strictly rendered, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving (or the test) of things not seen." According to this definition it follows, that if we believe in God we must believe in everything which he has revealed to us; so that when we are once convinced that He has spoken to us we have nothing to do but to submit, ever remembering that there are many things which our understanding cannot fathom. There are many things in His dealings, both in providence and in grace, which we cannot comprehend; many things which may appear inconsistent with what our feeble sense and finite reason might expect from His infinite justice and love. But we must learn to silence every misgiving with the ques-

tion of the Patriarch of old, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And we must look forward continually to the great HEREAFTER, when every apparent inequality in the Divine ways will be made plain.

Again, Faith requires that we give up ourselves wholly to Christ, to become His disciples not only in understanding but in heart and will; regarding His favour and His love as better than life itself.

With this in view, we must strive to set loose from the world, and to have ever our principal thoughts and desires fixed upon heaven and heavenly things. We must remember that God has made us heirs of the Kingdom and co-heirs with Christ; and that therefore it ill becomes us to love the world, and to think more of earthly joys or earthly hopes than of our interests in heaven. It is one of the surest signs of a true faith, that it overcomes the world, and works righteousness, and makes us ready to suffer the loss of all things so that we may win Christ and be found at last in Him.

A Prayer (From Bp. Taylor).

O Blessed Jesus, I know that Thou didst take upon Thee my nature, that Thou mightest suffer for my sins, and deliver me from them and from Thy Father's wrath; and I have been delivered from His wrath, that I might serve Thee in righteousness and holiness all my days. O Lord, I most humbly and truly believe with all my heart that Thou hast redeemed me and all mankind. This is my hope, the strength of my spirit, my joy and my confidence. Oh! never let the spirit of unbelief remove me from this rock. Thou art my Saviour, the rock of my might, in Thee will I trust. Oh! let my faith in Thee, which Thou hast wrought in me, be my comfort here, and my defence and shield in the day of judgment; through Thy mercies, O ever blessed Jesus, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

HOPE.

THE difference between faith and hope has been thus explained by St. Augustine. Faith has respect to all things revealed, whether good or bad; to things which are past, present, and to come; to things which concern us not, as well as to those in which we are specially interested. But hope has respect to things only which are good, and worthy of being hoped for. I believe that there is a heaven of eternal joy, whether I attain to it or not. But that I shall enter heaven is the object of my hope, and it is assured to me if I persevere in the ways of God It is the part of hope to rely upon God with a humble and patient expectation of His promises, and to desire and long for the great object of our hope, the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

We find constant exhortations to hope in Holy Scripture, partly because we are so prone to

become indifferent, but chiefly because of our tendency to despair. It seems so great and difficult a matter for frail and sinful creatures such as we are to reach heaven; and there are so many obstacles in the way, that God has been pleased to encourage us with many great and precious promises; and hope is quickened and strengthened by dwelling upon these. He is great, and wise, and faithful, and loving. He invites our hopes by all the varieties as well as the mercies of His providence. Are you tempted to despair of your salvation? Think of Christ in His agonies in Gethsemane and on the Cross. He that considers the love of the Father in giving His only begotten Son, and the love of the Son in giving Himself to die for us, may well believe that He desires our salvation, and that nothing short of our obstinate and continual resistance to His grace can deprive us of it.

Do you fear the future because of your past sin and forgetfulness? You will find it very helpful to treasure up in your memory not only the rich promises of Holy Scripture, but

also your own experience of the Divine favours and mercies to you in the past. "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." We lose half the benefit of God's mercies by forgetting them as soon as they have been received. See what David says: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Think thus with yourself. God has preserved me from many sins. His mercies are infinite: I hope He will preserve me from more. I have sinned, and He has spared me: I hope He will deliver me from the evils I have deserved. He has visited my heart with His Holy Spirit, and I trust that He has changed it. He will not despise the work of His own hands. He has helped my slow and feeble endeavours, and therefore I trust He will lead me onward to perfection. "He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him for us, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" He has elected me into the kingdom of grace; I will still hope that He will *admit me to His* Kingdom of glory. "Why art

thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I will yet praise Him, which is the health of my countenance and my God."

CHAPTER VI.

CHARITY.

By charity I mean love—the love of God. Of all the means of preparing for a happy HEREAFTER, there is none so effectual as the practice of Divine love. It is the greatest thing that God can give us, for God is love; and it is the greatest thing that we can give to God, for it is the perfection of every other grace, and therefore the Apostle calls it "the bond of perfectness." It is "the fulfilling of the law." It does the work of all other graces. I do not here speak of the love for our neighbour, which is included in the love of God; this is His commandment, that he that loveth God love his brother also.

How can we attain to such love as this?

1. We must keep our earthly desires in restraint. Every degree of inordinate affection for the things of this world, and every act of love for a sin, are hostile to the love of God. We may indeed love our friends and relations. But we must love them as God's gifts to us, and we must love Him more. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."

2. We must consider the immensity of God's love to us. He has created me, lifted me up out of the abyss of nothing; given me my reason, my intellect, my will, my affections; given me the power of knowing, and loving, and serving Him. He preserves me. Having obtained help of Him, I continue to this day. In Him I live and move and have my being. If He were to let go His hand, I should fall back into that nothingness out of which I came. He has given His only Son to die for me. He has forgiven me my sins. He has adopted me into *His family*. He has promised me, if I am faith-

ful to the end, an inheritance undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

O Almighty God, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards Thee that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

PRAYER.

It seems strange that they who profess to be looking forward to a happy HEREAFTER should require to be exhorted to pray to Him by whose grace alone they can be fitted for it. But every faithful Christian will admit his backwardness in respect of this great duty. Is it not a melancholy truth that most men have always, and that all men have sometimes, a strange indisposition to prayer? How weary we often are in

prayer; how glad when it is over; how quick to find excuses for our neglect of it! And yet, what is prayer but the asking of God to bestow upon us the greatest and the best things that we can need? and that, too, upon the strength of His own most gracious promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He who gave this promise is both God and man, and He now sits at the right hand of the Father, to receive and present our prayers and to make continual intercession for us at the throne of grace. And then, how easy is our access! It is true that there are times and seasons at which we are bidden to approach our God in a more formal manner: in the assemblies of His people, in those places where His honour dwelleth, and where our prayers mingle with those of our fellow-worshippers, and where Christ Himself is present, and the Holy Spirit is present, and the holy angels are present, to help and strengthen our devotions. But these are not the only *times and places* at which we are permitted to

draw near to God. At all times, in all places, He is ready to hear and answer the prayer of the humblest who approaches Him with hearty faith and pure intention. Prayer is in its simplest meaning nothing more than a devout ascent of the mind to God, a desiring of things fit to be desired, and an expression of this desire to Him as most becomes us.

But whether in private, or in the family, or in the great congregation, there are these rules which we ought ever to remember when we approach the Most High. We are bidden to ask for things requisite and necessary, as well for the body as for the soul. But it should be our chief care to ask of God for grace to enable us to do our duty, and to glorify Him ; to do those good works which He in His providence has prepared that we should walk in them ; to strive to live a good useful life *here*, and to lay hold on eternal life *there*. If we pray for these things, and with an honest and true heart labour to obtain them, we shall never fail ; for so shall there "be richly supplied unto us the entrance

into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter i. 11).

Then, once more: our prayers must be frequent, earnest, and continual. We must not pray by fits and starts. Our prayers must not be spasmodic and transitory; but we must daily renew our suits with hope and humility, with faith and patience. Our Lord has taught us, by means of a striking parable, that men "ought always to pray, and not to faint." And St. Paul bids us to "pray without ceasing." There are some things for which we must never cease to pray. We must continually pray for the pardon of our sins, for the help of God's grace, for the increase of love to Him and to all men, for life eternal, freely bestowed upon us for Christ's sake, and not for our merits. God loves a fervent prayer, and will give to the soul that truly seeks Him more than he can ask or think.

Do you find yourself wandering in prayer? Then pray earnestly to be kept from wandering. Pray for the spirit of grace and supplication, for a thoughtful, collected spirit. And if to this

prayer you add a strong moral effort to keep your thoughts from wandering, then if you still find it difficult to fix them, you may (though still struggling against your infirmity) attribute it to the "weakness of the flesh," and thank your merciful God that the "spirit is willing." Then you may say with the Psalmist: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer nor His mercy from me" (Ps. lxvi. 18-20).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

I ASSUME that every one who is, in good earnest, preparing for a happy HEREAFTER, will be a frequent and devout communicant. The command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me," is so plain, and the blessings and privileges

of Holy Communion are so great to those who worthily join in it, that I need not add more on this point, excepting just to say this: that there must be something utterly wrong in the thought and practice of him who constantly and wilfully absents himself from so holy and heavenly a feast. There may be times, as, for example, after some grievous fall, when it may be fitting that he who has sinned shall withdraw himself from this spiritual feast until he has satisfied himself that he is truly penitent; and, if necessary, has taken counsel with him whom God has appointed to be his guide in reference to that which concerns his spiritual state. But it should ever be remembered that no one professing and calling himself a Christian can absent himself from the Lord's Table without doing a grievous dishonour to Christ, as well as a great injury to his own soul.

But dismissing this, let a few thoughts be added to help those who are communicants to a more profitable use of this Holy Sacrament. Think well, then, before you come, how great

and holy a mystery is this, in which, through the elements of bread and wine, duly consecrated by His appointment, Christ Jesus, His graces, and the blessings and effects of His Passion, are conveyed to the soul of the worthy recipient. Confess, then, your unworthiness, acknowledge your sinfulness, and place all your hopes of favourable acceptance upon God's goodness and mercy. Do not trouble yourself with nice questions—how it is that these simple elements, when duly set apart as Christ has ordained, can become the means of conveying Himself and His blessings to your soul. "Dispute not," says Bishop Taylor, "concerning the secret of the mystery, and the nicety of the manner of Christ's presence. It is sufficient for thee that Christ shall be present to thy soul, as an instrument of grace, as a pledge of the resurrection, as the earnest of glory and immortality, and the means of many intermediate blessings, even all such as are necessary for thee, and are in order to thy salvation. And to make all this good to thee, there is nothing

necessary on thy part but a holy life, and a true belief of all the sayings of Christ, amongst which, indefinitely assent to the words of Institution, and believe that Christ in the Holy Sacrament gives thee His Body and Blood. He that believes not this is not a Christian. He that believes so much needs not to inquire farther, nor to entangle his faith by disbelieving his sense."

A PRAYER (Bishop Taylor).

O Most Gracious and Eternal God, the helper of the helpless, the comforter of the comfortless, the hope of the afflicted, the bread of the hungry, the drink of the thirsty, and the Saviour of all them that wait on Thee, I bless and glorify Thy Name, and adore Thy goodness and delight in Thy love, that Thou hast once more given me the greatest favour which I can receive in this world, even the Body and Blood of Christ, upon which I am bidden to feed in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. O, take from me all affection to sin or vanity! Let not my affections dwell below, but soar upwards to the element of love, to the seat of God, to the regions of glory, that I may hunger and thirst for the Bread of Life, and may know no love but the love of God, and the most merciful Jesus. Amen.

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